



SEPTEMBER

2023

MATTHEW

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

“...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend Youth/Growth Group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday AM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday PM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

Scripture Memory:

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? _____

I will share Christ with _____ person/people this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

Other Activities:

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. _____

CONTROL

MATTHEW 1:18-25

How much control do you allow God to have over your life? Can He take you wherever He wants? Would you allow Him to remove any relationship He wanted? If He did, would you respond as Joseph did in today's reading? Joseph was about to live the dream most of us have. He was about to be married to the woman he loved. No doubt his heart and mind were filled with plans for his future with Mary. Then, he found out that the woman he was about to marry was pregnant, and he knew it couldn't be his child. We can only imagine the devastation. Without malice or revenge, Joseph began to make plans to end his relationship with Mary in a way that would not cause her public disgrace. In that frame of mind, an angel appeared to him and told him the situation was not as he thought. Mary had not been unfaithful to him. The child she carried was through the Holy Spirit. In one short moment, his carefully thought-out plan was a thing of the past. He responded to his changing world by doing exactly what the angel had told him. Joseph allowed God to have total control over his life. Do you allow God that kind of control?

SAY WHAT?

In what area of your life do you find it difficult to give God complete control?

SO WHAT?

What are you afraid will happen if you allow God to do what He wants in that area?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use the example of Joseph to help you give God absolute control of your life?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 1

MATTHEW 2:13-23

CHANGE OF PLANS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

In what ways did Joseph continue to allow God to intervene and change his plans? Stop and think about what God asked him to do in this chapter. First, God required him to get married immediately, in spite of the gossip that must have occurred due to Mary's pregnancy. Then, he had to wait to have sex with his new wife until after the birth of the baby. This was not the ideal beginning the newlywed couple must have envisioned. After Jesus was born, God asked Joseph to move to a foreign country—not just another town or a different state. God wanted him in Egypt. He packed up his family and left for Egypt. He probably settled into Egyptian life and put roots down. Then, God called him once again to leave his home. He wanted Joseph back in Israel. Not back to his hometown, but to a place called Nazareth. Each time, Joseph did what God asked of him. He could obey only if he completely trusted in God. He was willing to submit to God's plan. He had no idea how vital his obedience was to the ultimate plan of God but, because he obeyed, God's plan of redemption came to mankind. Would you allow God to use you in this way?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 2

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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MATTHEW 4:1-11

TEMPTATION

SAY WHAT?

When have you been vulnerable to Satan's temptations?

SO WHAT?

Are there weak areas in your life that you find Satan continually tempting you?

NOW WHAT?

How can you prepare yourself for these attacks?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

According to Matthew 4:2, when did Satan tempt Jesus? Why do you think he waited to tempt Jesus in this way? The answers to those questions give us important information about the method Satan uses to tempt us. It also shows us how to be better prepared to resist Satan when he tempts us. First, Satan waited to tempt Jesus with bread until He had not eaten for forty days. Satan patiently waited for the perfect moment because he knew that time often weakens resistance. He did not tempt Jesus with food after He had eaten a big meal, but when He was hungry. Satan often waits until we are the weakest before he attacks us. It may be after a hard week at school or work and when we are most vulnerable that he tempts us. Satan waits for the right moment and then cleverly manipulates us into not trusting God to provide what we need. In what area are you the most vulnerable to the temptations of Satan? How can you prepare yourself to resist him? What Scripture will help you?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 3-4

Beginning today, and continuing for the next few weeks, we are going to work through one of the greatest messages ever preached. It is called the Sermon on the Mount. It contains so many spiritual lessons and principles, that we will be looking at just one paragraph each day. The purpose of this message, found in chapters 5-7, demonstrates the difference between religion and following Jesus. Jesus taught that following Him is something supernatural and internal, not just outward conformity. He demonstrated that their definition had missed the mark. Today's reading includes the beatitudes. It is a list of characteristics that ought to be true of every follower of Jesus. Use the chart provided to examine your life and see how you measure up. In other words, how does what you claim to be true on the inside impact your behavior on the outside? If you do not know what some of the terms mean, ask for help. An understanding of the terms is key to an effective evaluation.

THE BEATITUDE:

WHAT IT MEANS:

- poor in spirit
- mourn
- meek
- hunger and thirst
for righteousness
- merciful
- pure in heart
- peacemakers
- persecuted

EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 5

MATTHEW 5:13-16

SALT AND LIGHT

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What does it mean to be salt and light in your world? The answer reveals God's expectations for those who follow Jesus. Salt, in Biblical days, was a valuable commodity. Often, people would be paid their wages in salt. The main function of salt was to slow down contamination. There are many parallels between its functions and following Jesus. As salt, we should improve our environment. When we walk into a room, the conversation might change and those around us may behave better. While salt is more of a subtle influence, light is more open and obvious. Light is used to eliminate darkness. Followers of Jesus are to eliminate the darkness. We reveal to the world that their values are wrong. Our lives reveal the truth of God and the lies of Satan and the world. When people are confused, we help them see the truth. As salt and light, we must do all we can to influence the world. If you follow Jesus, are you being salt and light? If you don't follow Jesus, what is stopping you?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

What does it mean to have your righteousness surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law (vs20)? The answer will help us examine our lives and help us understand the rest of this message even more fully. The Pharisees and teachers of the law had an outward, behavioral righteousness. They did all the right things outwardly, thinking that God was pleased with them. They did not murder or commit adultery, and they followed the law—which kept them comfortable. Lesser people committed the big sins, but the Pharisees and religious teacher's behavior was flawless, or so they thought. What they missed was who they were on the inside. While their outward behavior seemed righteous, the condition of their hearts was not. They appeared to be blameless, but their hearts were filled with wickedness. Jesus was not implying that outward behavior is unimportant, but that it does not always show the true condition of someone's heart. In each of these next paragraphs, Jesus will reveal the true condition of our hearts. The condition of a person's heart is the most important issue. What is the condition of your heart?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

MATTHEW 5:21-26

ANGER

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Did Jesus mean that any time I call someone a fool I am in danger of being sent to hell? If that's the case, many of us are in big trouble. In this section, Jesus demonstrated to His listeners that their standard for being right with God fell short. They understood that all forms of murder were wrong and that anyone who murdered should be punished. Jesus explained that God's standard for murder is considerably higher than their own. Jesus said the standard is anger. Anger toward someone who has offended you or frustrated you is wrong. A brooding anger that will not die is what He was talking about. It is an anger that does not want reconciliation. It is anger that reveals itself through verbal insults and abuse. At times, it goes beyond insults to actually attacking someone's character. While murder is wrong, the anger in our hearts is the real issue. It is so serious that if we're angry, we must reconcile before we worship (vs23-24). It is so serious that if we are angry, it must be reconciled today. Waiting until tomorrow is too late(vs25-26). Is there anger you need to deal with today?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

What does it mean to look lustfully? Again in this section, we see that the listeners of this sermon had a wrong concept of the law concerning adultery. They were taught that as long as you did not physically commit sexual sin you were in good standing before God. Jesus made it clear that their standard was wrong. A lustful look is not an accidental or unintentional look. It is when you intentionally look with the purpose of lusting. Jesus makes the point that to God, this is so serious that we need to take radical steps, if needed, to resist. How pure are your thoughts? What steps are you taking to avoid sexual sin? Who can you talk to that will help you create a plan or keep you accountable?

SAY WHAT?

What are some common sexual temptations someone might face?

SO WHAT?

What steps can you take to avoid sexual temptation?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use God's Word as a tool to help in this area?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

PROVERBS 13

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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DIVORCE

MATTHEW 5:31-32

Why would Jesus' listeners have a wrong view of divorce? According to Matthew 19:1-12, it was because they had a wrong view of Deuteronomy 24:1-5. They were wrongly taught that the passage in Deuteronomy granted divorce for any reason, as long as someone went about it properly. Jesus wanted to correct their wrong view. In Matthew 19, Jesus explained God's design for marriage. God never intended for a couple to divorce. God's will would be for a couple to work through any problem that arises and not view divorce as the solution. In this passage, Jesus explained that most of what they considered grounds for divorce was wrong. Jesus also explained that adultery does not automatically mean someone should get a divorce. He said that if a divorce comes as a result of unrepentant repeated adultery, then the innocent party doesn't commit adultery if they remarry. God hates divorce and never wants it to be a solution. No matter the sin or the issue, we must always seek restoration and reconciliation. But when that is not possible, God provides for the innocent.

SAY WHAT?

How does Matthew 19:1-12 help us understand more fully God's view of divorce?

SO WHAT?

How does 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 help us more fully understand God's view of divorce?

NOW WHAT?

How does Matthew 18:15-35 help us more fully understand God's view of divorce?

THEN WHAT?

In light of today's reading, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

MATTHEW 5

MATTHEW 5:33-37

OATHS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

According to today's reading, can we make any kind of oath? Again, what Jesus has done in this passage is correct a wrong view that they had about what was truly spiritual. The religious rulers of that day had created an elaborate system of vows designed to enable them to lie and back out of a commitment. They knew a person should not break a vow to God and believed someone was only bound when they swore by important things. If someone swore by the Temple, it was binding. But, if someone swore by their house, it was not binding. Jesus wanted them to understand that all commitments were binding. When we say we will do something, it means we will, even if we don't add "I promise." Jesus gave us His standard of integrity to live by. Giving our word should be enough and, if not, it is sin. Our yes should be yes and our no should be no. How do you measure up to this standard?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

Do these verses teach that we should let people take advantage of us? At the time Jesus spoke these words, retaliation was permitted if you kept it to the same offense that was committed against you. They misinterpreted the Law which granted the judicial system the right to enforce this principle. It did not give an individual the right to retaliate. The Law was designed to deter crime and ensure that the punishment fit the crime. The illustrations that Jesus gave demonstrate that point. Jesus' point was that when our dignity is attacked, we are not to retaliate. If we have done something wrong, we should not defend ourselves, but be willing to do whatever is necessary to make it right. We should go the extra mile. Does this describe you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5



MATTHEW 5:43-48

ENEMIES

SAY WHAT?

How do you define an enemy?

SO WHAT?

How do you treat your enemies?

NOW WHAT?

How can you apply today's reading to your relationship with your enemies?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

What was wrong with the Pharisees' interpretation of the Golden Rule? Is it similar to the way people interpret it today? First of all, they left out part of the command, and second, their definition of neighbor was wrong. Their interpretation included loving those who were nice to them and hating those who weren't. They knew the Law taught them to love their neighbors, but ignored the part about loving them as oneself. Another sticky point was who they determined their neighbors to be. The definition they held of neighbor did not include anyone they had contact with, but only those whose company they enjoyed. The story of the Good Samaritan demonstrated that they were to love everyone they met as themselves. Jesus also said that the true expectation God has for us is to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We are to live our lives above the world's standard of how to treat people. The world loves only those who are nice to them, but we are called to a higher standard. We are called to treat everyone with love. How do you treat your enemies? Do you pray for them? Would your enemy notice your kindness to him?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 5

HYPOCRISY

MATTHEW 6:1-18

What is the difference between hypocrisy and sincerity? Today's reading makes that very clear. Often, when we think of hypocrisy we think of glaring examples of people who live double lives. Jesus taught that hypocrisy is more subtle. First, we learn that a hypocrite's motives are selfish and someone who is sincere is selfless. The hypocrite does things to be noticed by people. The one who is sincere does things to please God and to help others. Second, the hypocrite's actions are noticeable, while the sincere person's are concealed. The hypocrite wants to be noticed for his apparent good deeds, and the one who is sincere tries to be as inconspicuous as possible. Third, the rewards of a hypocrite are temporal, while the rewards of the sincere are eternal. The hypocrite does things to be seen and honored. Those who are sincere get noticed by God, and He rewards them. Which one are you most like? What needs to change?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 6



MATTHEW 6:19-24

TREASURE

SAY WHAT?

What treasures on earth do people store up?

SO WHAT?

What treasures in heaven could a person store up?

NOW WHAT?

What changes can you make that would help you store up treasure in heaven?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

What do people view as treasures on earth? What would examples of treasures in heaven be? How do we store them up? How can you identify where your treasure is? It would seem that an easy way to tell where your treasure is would be to look at where you spend most of your time. A person who claims their treasure is in heaven would not neglect personal time with God, church, or time to help others. It's tragic to see people store up treasures on earth but not where they will last forever. Where is your treasure? Do the things of God take priority over friends, hobbies, social media, sports, etc.? If not, then you are probably storing up treasures on earth. Make treasures in heaven your priority. Your heart will be where it should be and your time will be invested as it should be.

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 6

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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MATTHEW 6:25-34

WORRY

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How do verses 19-24 relate to the verses we read today? Yesterday's passage is the key that unlocks the expectations Jesus gives in this section. Yesterday, we were told to make sure that we do not lay up treasure on earth. We were encouraged to make our focus storing up treasure in heaven. Today, we are told not to worry about things on earth. Jesus tells us that God will provide what we need. It is not necessary for us to worry about it. The contrast to worry is found in verse 33. Instead of worrying about earthly things, which God has promised to provide for us, we should seek after God's kingdom and His righteousness. If our treasure is on earth, our focus will then be on earthly things. We will worry about having enough and make it our goal to get as much as we can. If our treasure is in heaven, our goal will be to seek after God and make His righteousness our desire. If we seek after God, we are less prone to worry about earthly things. So, where are you? Are you seeking after God and His righteousness? Or, are you worrying about earthly things? How can you worry about them less?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 6

What does judging someone, as described in today's reading, mean? Does it mean we should never tell someone they are doing something wrong? Does it mean we should not correct wrong behavior or attitudes? We know that Jesus could not mean that we have no responsibility to correct sin, because the Scriptures clearly command us to do so. What Jesus did was condemn us for assuming that we know someone's motives based on their external actions. The Pharisees had created their own system of righteousness. They looked at an individual's appearance and made value judgments about them based on the system they had created. They apparently felt that they were superior to everyone else. Jesus warns us that we will be judged by the same standard we use to judge others. He tells us to be careful judging people when we ourselves have sin in our lives. When we correct or admonish someone, we need to use God's standard, not our own. We need to be certain we are motivated by love, with our goal being to help, not condemn. We must be careful to ask questions before making judgments. Judging is God's responsibility. He alone knows our true motives.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 7

MATTHEW 7:7-12

OUR PRAYERS

SAY WHAT?

How would a wrong view of God impact your prayers?

SO WHAT?

How would a correct view of God impact your prayers?

NOW WHAT?

How should today's reading affect your prayers?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Was Jesus suggesting, in verse 7, that God will give us whatever we want if we simply ask Him? If we did not look at this passage closely we could conclude that. His point was that we should pray and ask God for things because He delights in giving us good gifts. To illustrate that in a more obvious way, He uses the example of how a father loves his son. A father would not give his son something harmful after the son made a request. If the son needed bread, a father would not give him a stone. If the son needed fish, he would not give him a snake. Jesus explained that God is a more gracious father than a human father could be. If a human father wants to give his children good gifts, how much more would our Heavenly Father want to give us good gifts? God does not decide how He can hurt us the most, but rather delights in providing good gifts for His children. Do you view God this way when you pray? When making your requests to God, do you see Him as a gracious Father who loves to give to His children? How can this passage help you when you pray? Does your view of God need to change?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 7

Why does Jesus call the way to heaven a narrow gate? As you think about it there could be several reasons. Jesus made it clear in today's reading that there are only two gates, and we must choose which gate to enter. A large group of people will enter the broad gate. The narrow gate will have only a few people, and is the only gate that leads to heaven. The word narrow suggests a number of truths about salvation. First, it implies that you must enter it alone. You cannot enter in a group. You can't enter based on who you know or who you accompany. Second, it implies that you can't take anything with you. It demonstrates that those who come to Jesus, come stripped of everything. Finally, it implies an uncommon and less traveled way. Salvation comes only through God's way. To enter heaven, you must submit to God's plan. So, which gate have you chosen to enter?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 7



MATTHEW 7:15-23

TRULY SAVED?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Is it possible to believe you are saved and on your way to heaven and not really be? Could you think heaven awaits you, but really be on your way to hell? According to today's reading, it is not only possible to think you are saved and not be, but it's also possible to have what you consider proof of salvation, and yet not truly be saved. Jesus said that there will be many people who will arrive at heaven's gate thinking they will be permitted to enter. In fact, according to verse 22, they can point to evidence of their salvation, only to hear Jesus declare "I never knew you." Jesus said that it is those who do the will of the Father who are truly on their way to heaven. This passage is frightening when we realize that Jesus was not talking to pagans but to the devoted religious people of His day. It includes those who faithfully attend church and may even be involved in a ministry. There will be tragic consequences for those who have based their eternal security on wrong criteria. Do you know that you are truly saved? Are you basing it on correct evidence?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 7

How can you tell if you are wise or foolish? What would you look for to be able to tell? According to this passage, one test is to see how well you hold up during hard times. When the rains and floods of life beat down on the house of someone wise, it stands firm. When the troubles of life beat down on the home of someone foolish, it crumbles. The reason is important to see. The wise are able to weather the storms of life because they not only hear the word of God, but they put what they hear into practice. They attend church and not only hear the truth, but work to put what they hear into practice. They not only read their Bible and take to heart what it says, but also puts into practice what they read. Because they have put into practice what they learned, they grow spiritually and become strong. When the storm hits their house, they are able to weather it. How about you? Are you just a hearer of the Word? What have you heard recently that you have put into practice? Are you growing spiritually?

SAY WHAT?

What have you heard from God's Word recently?

SO WHAT?

In what ways have you worked at putting into practice what you have learned?

NOW WHAT?

How can you ensure that you continually put into practice what you hear?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 7



PROVERBS 15

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE	WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES	HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE
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What was it about the centurion that amazed Jesus? What does his example reveal about you? A man came to Jesus seeking healing for his servant. Jesus offered to go with the man to heal the servant. The man did not want Jesus to have to leave with him. Why? Because he knew he was unworthy to have the Son of God under his roof. Jesus had people making all kinds of demands of Him while he was on earth. Rarely did He find someone who came to Him humbly, knowing that he deserved nothing from Jesus. The centurion knew he was unworthy and that Jesus would only have to speak the words and his servant would be healed. He had great faith! In fact, that was what impressed Jesus. Jesus' heart was moved by this man's response and He healed his servant. Just like this man had authority over men as a centurion, Jesus had authority over all things. What can we learn? When we come to God with a request, we should approach Him in the same way. Are you demanding when you pray, as if God were obligated to answer your requests based on how deserving you are? The next time you enter His presence, enter with humility.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 8

MATTHEW 8:18-34

PEOPLE

SAY WHAT?

What things do we tend to value more than people?

SO WHAT?

How can you tell if something is more important to you than people?

NOW WHAT?

How can you value people more than yourself?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

How do you think the townspeople felt about the two men who were demon-possessed? Do you think they felt sorry for them? Do you think those men came up in conversations around town? Did they pray for them? Avoid them? As we observe the responses of the citizens in today's passage, we get a glimpse of how they really felt and also learn something about ourselves. Jesus freed the demon-possessed men, and the townspeople responded by asking Jesus to leave. Why? We could assume that they would have been thrilled by what they had seen. If they had been concerned at all for the men, they would have been overjoyed. Could it be that they were more concerned over the loss of their property than they were over the men who were healed? Is that why they did not rejoice in their deliverance? What in your life is more important than people? What would you be willing to give up if it meant that someone would be helped? Ask God to help you view the people in your life as more valuable than yourself.

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 8

GOOD TEACHER?

MATTHEW 9:1-17

If you ask the people you meet today who Jesus Christ was, what answers might they give? A common answer is that He was a good teacher or a great man of God, like a prophet. Today's reading proves He could not have been either of those. In this chapter, we read that Jesus healed a paralytic man, and then also told him that his sins were forgiven. The teachers of the Law heard this statement and believed that Jesus was blaspheming by claiming to be God, who alone can forgive sins. We read further that Jesus knew they were thinking that He was claiming to be God. A good teacher or a prophet would, at that moment, attempt to correct the wrong assumptions they were making. Jesus, however, did not correct their thinking, but reinforced it. He told them that He had the power and the authority to forgive sins and was, therefore, God. We must conclude that He is God or that He was a liar. He could not have been a prophet or a good teacher and conducted Himself in this way. Who do you believe Jesus Christ is?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 9



MATTHEW 9:18-38

A PROPER VIEW

SAY WHAT?

How can you determine if your view of lost people is the same as Christ's?

SO WHAT?

What prevents us from seeing people this way?

NOW WHAT?

How can you gain a greater burden for the lost?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

When you walk into your workplace, what thoughts go through your mind? When you walk down the halls of your school, what do you think about? Do you have thoughts similar to the ones Jesus had in today's passage? Jesus saw the crowds and was moved with compassion towards them. He saw that they were not righteous before God. He knew they were helpless, with no way to change their spiritual condition. Their wrong behavior did not cause Him to become angry with or critical of them. He wanted to help them. Much too often, we take the opposite view of people when we see them. We are disgusted with the behavior of the people in our workplace, but never feel burdened for their needs. We walk the halls at school and become frustrated with people, but never grieve over their difficulties. What do you see when you look at this world? Is your heart moved with compassion, compelled to do something about it? Or, are you critical and do what you can to avoid being around them? Thankfully, Jesus had compassion for us and made a way to save us.

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 9

Why did Jesus give the instructions He did in verses 7-10 of this passage? One reason may have been to demonstrate the proper motivation someone should have for serving others. Since the disciples were given amazing powers, it would have been easy for them to be tempted to use the power of God for personal gain. If you needed healing, the disciples could have charged you a fee to be healed. Who, in the midst of a life-threatening illness, would not pay great sums of money to be healed personally or have a loved one healed? What price would you be willing to pay to have your mother or father or sister raised from the dead? Jesus' further instructions to the disciples were to take no money or extra clothes with them. He wanted them to be dependent on Him to provide for their needs. He wanted their sole motivation to be love and a sincere desire to meet the needs of people. Money should not be a determining factor of whether or not someone receives the ministry of God. We need people whom God has blessed to use their gifts freely in ministry to others and not for personal or financial gain. We love because He first loved us.

SAY WHAT?

In what ways do people use their gifts for personal gain?

SO WHAT?

How can you tell someone's motivation for serving others?

NOW WHAT?

How could you safeguard yourself from using your gifts for personal gain?

THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's passage?

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 10

MATTHEW 10:26-42

CARE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why would God have the hairs on our heads numbered? How often in the course of a day does the number change? It sure seems as though that would be an unimportant issue. It sure seems like a great effort for something so trivial. However, if you ever watch a mother with her new baby, you begin to understand. She studies the baby for hours wanting to know every detail about her child. If she could, she might even count the hairs on their head. Why? Because to her there is nothing about her baby that does not matter. God cares about every detail of your life—even how many hairs you have. If He cares about your hair, how much more do you think He cares about things that hurt you? In what ways have you felt forgotten and alone, or that God doesn't care? Use verses 30 and 31 to remind you of this great truth. Remember, God cares about every detail of your life and wants that to be a comfort.

EXTRA READING
MATTHEW 10

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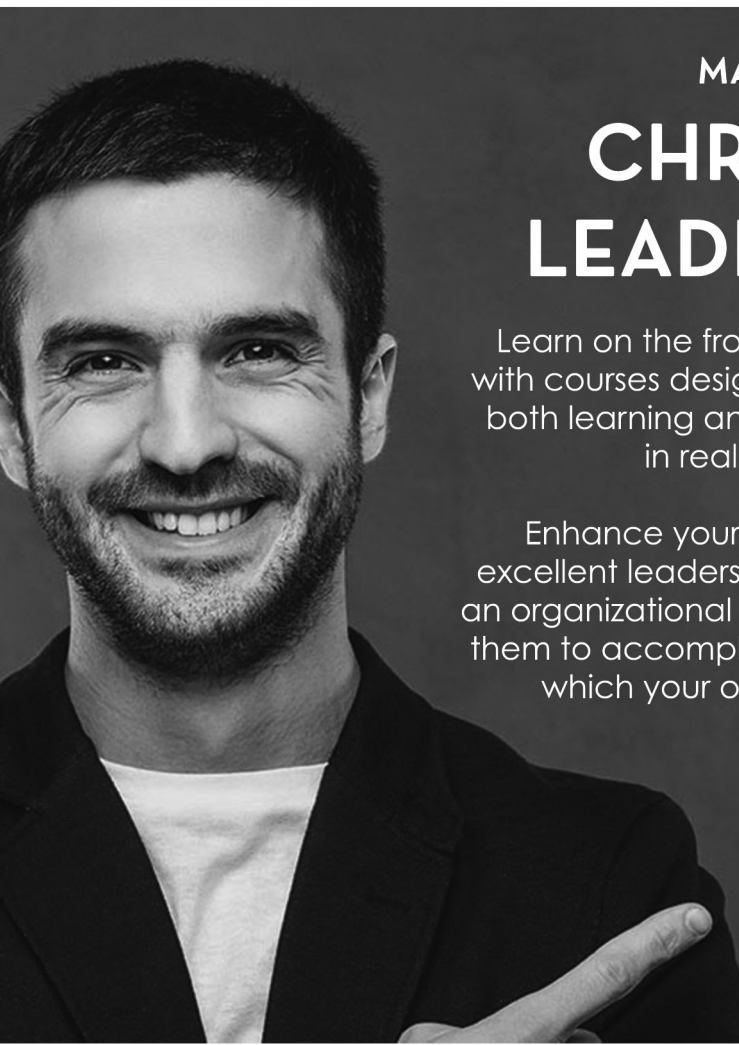
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THIS HOPE WE HAVE AS AN **ANCHOR** OF THE SOUL, A HOPE BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST AND ONE WHICH ENTERS WITHIN THE VEIL, WHERE **JESUS** HAS ENTERED AS A FORERUNNER FOR US...
HEBREWS 6:19-20



SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD
ABOVE ALL ELSE, AND LIVE
RIGHTEOUSLY, AND HE WILL
GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU
NEED.

MATTHEW 6:33 (NLT)

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